


GILBERT TALBOT

1990 ROUND UP



TOC H



Toc H is a movement of people who seek to build friendships, and offer service, across the barriers that usually divide us from one another. The basic unit is the group - at best a good cross-section of the local neighbourhood - which meets together regularly, and seeks to serve the community around it. Toc H was founded in 1915 by the Rev P. B. 'Tubby' Clayton, and since then has been providing opportunities for people to test the Christian way by practical experiment.

All members pledge themselves to try:

1. To welcome all in friendship and lessen by habit of thought, word and deed the prejudices which separate people.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while listening with respect to the views of others.
4. To acknowledge the spiritual nature of man and to test the Christian way by trying it.

This magazine is a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world as well as a record of Toc H service. Its title derives from the third of these Four Points.

To Sit in Quietness

Some months ago, while walking with a friend through one of the smaller dales in West Yorkshire, she suddenly said: 'Isn't it lovely to hear the sound of water rushing?' I agreed, and for the remainder of our walk reflected on and off about what she had said.

Her comment reminded me of another occasion years before in Pembrokeshire when, on a night completely unlit by artificial light, my children and I had discovered the Milky Way for the first time. Not the usual star map, but the fine, soft, gauzy haze, cons beyond our nearest star, which is frequently obscured to town-dwellers.

That memory, and my companion's words, made me realize that much of what is natural in the world is in danger of becoming lost to us; machinery and traffic, the harshness of modern lighting and high-rise ugliness obscures it. The danger is, that becoming insensitive to our surroundings may prevent us from being aware of and sensitive to our own internal world. It is difficult for most of us to sit in quietness, in real silence, and reflect on that which is not tangible. Somehow, being discovered doing nothing, creates in us a sense of guilt, of being 'found out'. We need to account for each moment in the currency of tasks done, objectives achieved. Being alone and silent, being able to be alone and silent is seen to be pathological. We are encouraged always to get out and mix, join a club, belong to a society, become associated or affiliated, rather than be solitary. and yet within solitude and silence are the beginnings of human creativity. Both are conditions in which the human spirit can flourish.

Great music, great literature, thought that has transcended previous thought, has not been created against a background of noise and turmoil. Personal pain is better resolved in quiet reflection; attitudes are re-assessed in the quiet places of the mind - away from the day to day experiences which helped to form them in the first place.

It is through silence and solitude that we can become aware of that thing, other than ourselves, which some call God.

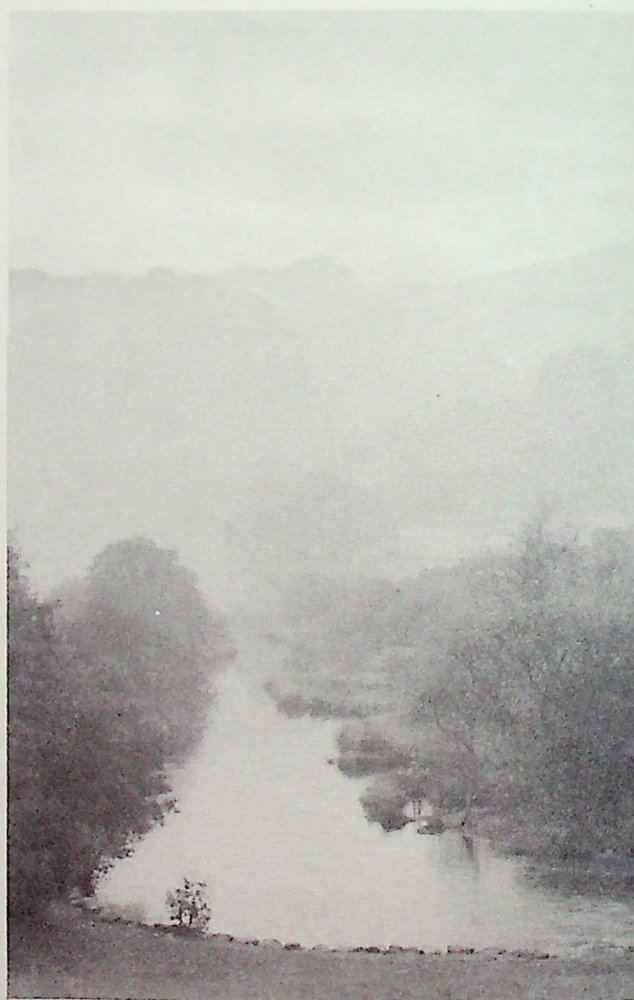
Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days to wrestle with his need to reconcile human frailty with a messianic mission. He went alone and came back prepared for his ministry. Buddha, sitting in solitude beneath a tree on the banks of the Nairanjana river achieved enlightenment, and Muhammad withdrew to his cave of Hera to reflect on God.

Silence and solitude have within them great richness. They are not an emptiness, but rather an emptying out - a preparation for those experiences which can truly be called 'spiritual'.

Jacqueline Bartlett

Editor: Ruth Boyd
Designer: Sybil A. Chick

Cover
The Last Post at the Menin Gate. *Photo: Ruth Boyd*



The Impossible Dream Jack Harrison

I am one of those silent millions who have not spoken yet; I am also one of those countless geriatrics who, if we ever find a common voice, will become an irresistible force. So watch out all you youngsters of 30, 40, 50 and 65 who may think you have it made and need no guidance from an old has-been like me.

I spent 30 years of my life on the staff of Toc H, serving a cause in which I believed and which demanded a definite way of life. Before that I had been a member of a branch for some years, and I retained my links with branches in London Marks and later with branches in Kent. So I can claim to have a little experience of membership.

I left the staff in 1964, withdrawing from active service in Toc H when a new adventure in Christian living began. About two years ago I renewed my membership and again became a fully paid up, card carrying member. These facts establish my bona fides and I write out of love and loyalty for and to Toc H.

Being, in some sense, not a new member I set out to discover what Toc H stood for in the present day; that is to say, what it meant to a new generation. I read *Point 3* with something more than a passing interest, and have been immensely encouraged by some of the things which are being done by groups of members as a continuing effort of love and care - working with people less fortunate and becoming one together. That is excellent; Toc H is alive and kicking.

Then came the Great Debate on the Nature of Toc H. Here was the very thing I was seeking, and I awaited the outcome with interest. After mountains of paper had been used up in telling us what to think, the final Report came in Two Stages. Stage One was the Chaplain's effort; Stage Two the 'Special Purposes' team's effort. I must confess my disappointment; the mountain had not even produced a live mouse; only a couple of squeaks which got nowhere near the heart of Toc H as I had known it. I began to think that perhaps I had made a mistake, in returning to something which had lost its way.

I persisted in silence to reconsider the position. I turned hopefully to the articles by Philip, thinking that here was a young man with practical experience of working full-time in Toc H. Perhaps he had a deeper understanding of it? What was the goal, the object which had to be achieved?

As far as I could see, Philip's satisfaction with a corporate task, having friendship as a spin-off, leaves Toc H on an equal par with Rotary, Round Table or Lions. The difference between Toc H and these others, with their stronger membership, is that they are usually more efficient in the jobs they do.

'Toc H needs to be specific in its Christian basis'

Philip does not claim any particular Christian or 'Christianising' element in the jobs he advocates, which apparently are to be the central pillar on which Toc H should rely for 'success'. Yet even the Great Debate maintained that Toc H was a Christian, maybe even 'Christianising' movement. Of course it is right and proper that Toc H should do such jobs but we are not unique in that; humanists can and often do the same.

The Report of the Great Debate does not specify in which particular way Toc H is Christian. The word Christian is a label applied to all sorts of people who may, or may not, be Christian. Toc H must be specific. An attempt was made in the Chaplain's Report, which said that Toc H was an experience going outwards and inwards. This reminded me of a pointless game we played at school, called 'In and Out the Windows'. This 'in and out' business gets us nowhere in a Christian sense; evil has the same effect, going outwards from a diseased mind and returning to make the mind even more diseased. So, as a Christian principle, the definition in the Chaplain's report of a Toc H principle has no value.

What is left? The Main Resolution, re-affirmed, holds one clue; the Toc H Prayer holds another. Surely the team who dealt with the Great Debate did not ignore these two statements?

May an old man, who is obviously out of touch with Toc H today, bore you with one final thought and ask you to pray about it.

Toc H needs to be specific in its Christian basis; the expression of that basis needs to be so challenging that it is beyond the power of man alone. God must be right in the midst.

The challenge in my day was what I shall call 'An Impossible Dream'. The purpose of Toc H was to build the Kingdom of God in the wills of men. To prepare for this task we pledged ourselves to strive to listen, now and always, to the Voice of God; to know His will revealed in Christ and to do it.

Clearly this impossible dream could not be realised without God's help, so Tubby wrote the Toc H prayer for all Branches to use whenever they met.

'Toc H was once called God's Show'

The impossible dream was realised in the lives of far more men and women than one can personally know. But I do know of several who are alive today in whom that dream became reality, and far more who are now dead. I think of Ken Preston, Pilot of Keighley Branch in the 20's; Bill Ashby, Pilot of Seal Branch in the 50's; Jim Brown, first Secretary of the Church Commissioners; Ronnie Symons, once Chairman of Toc H; Stan Berwick, once Treasurer; John Jones; Padre 'Barkis'; Rex Calkin; Peter Monie; Hubert Secretan; Pat Leonard; Don MacKenzie and Alan Paton of Natal . . . All these, and more, I remember with thanksgiving and love. Each one has been a source of encouragement and inspiration to me, and remains so to this day.

Therein lies the difference between Toc H and other splendid secular movements. If today the leaders believe in the Impossible Dream I shall rejoice. But, if Toc H is unable to re-affirm this Impossible Dream then Toc H, sadly, is no longer the movement I loved, and I shall pray that its leaders will wake up and discover for themselves why Toc H was once called God's Show.

■ *The Revd Jack Harrison, aged 82, is a former Finance Officer of Toc H.*

Great War memories

Kay Hill spent the Christmas of 1917 at Farnborough, Hants, and describes something of the hardship that faced families in England whilst their men were away on the battlefields.

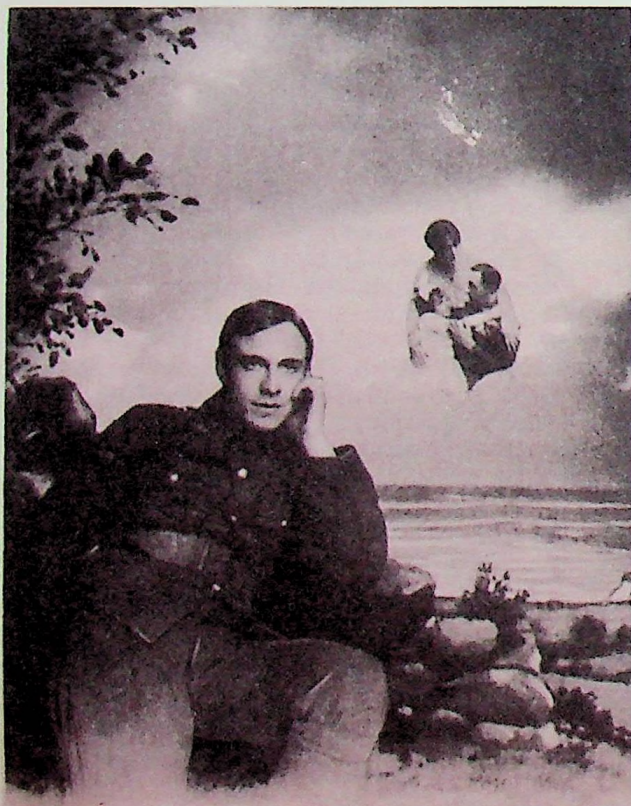
The Bloater Christmas



When the telegram came, to say that my father was already in England and would be home on leave within hours, it threw his family into a panic because we had received a letter from Flanders to say that there would be no leave for Christmas. Now there were only a few hours left before the shops closed on Christmas Eve; we had no extra rations, and food was getting very short.

Looking back to that winter of 1917, I believe that the civilian population hit rock bottom. A few essentials were rationed and for the rest it was hit or miss, according to where you were when extras appeared. (We did not then know that a highly efficient pack of German killer-submarines was picking off our merchant ships; that there were only a few weeks' reserve of food for the entire country, until the convoy system relieved the situation).

Bread was a strange grey colour, like porridge, and quickly went sour and soggy. The butter ration was two ounces per week - I used to toast a round of bread and use the whole lot on it. Margarine had no resemblance to what we use today, it was just a solid block of bright yellow fat that would not spread and tasted horrible. Fruit was seasonal, a glut in autumn and then scarce, because little was imported. Sweets were not on ration and very scarce, and meat was usually disgusting, a small lump of coarse-grained purplish beef with a doubtful smell, and far from fresh.



When we went shopping there were so many women in mourning black, or half-mourning - grey or purple - they seemed to darken the streets; even children wore black arm bands and men, mostly elderly or unfit for the army, wore black ties. We had not been long in Farnborough, the shopkeepers did not know us, so it was natural that if they had any delicacies they kept them out of sight for customers they knew.

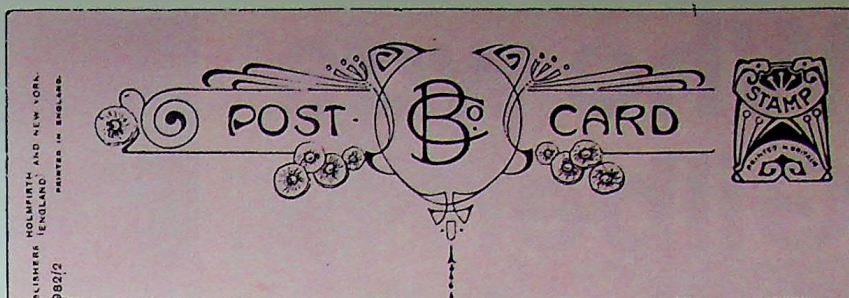
So, on that Christmas Eve, we came back with nothing extra and had to tell my father when he arrived. He went straight out, saying with confidence that he would find something, being straight from the frontline.

Within an hour he returned, put a bundle wrapped in newspaper on the dining room table, and we opened it. Inside there were four bloaters.

I do not know who laughed first but in seconds we were helpless with laughter, standing round the table and clutching the chairs until the front door bell rang. I went out to answer it, little knowing that everything was to change because of something that had happened three years back, before the outbreak of war . . .

Illustrations from two postcards from a wartime series entitled 'The Trail that Leads to Home.'

Detail from the reverse of one of the postcards on opposite page.



My elder brother Duncan had passed, at the usual age of 12, with flying colours, into the Navy, and was now aged 14 at the Royal Naval College Dartmouth and already a Cadet Captain; my second brother was at boarding school on the south coast and I, in term-time, became an only child. I loved to escape and, most of all, to set off to the local farm and 'help' Mrs Brunton to feed the poultry and calves, the orphan lambs in spring time, and to watch the milking.

After a while I asked her if I could learn to milk. She looked at me doubtfully and said, 'You'll have to ask your Mum, but mind you, if you do, there'll be no playing around. You'll do it properly or not at all'.

So, I learned to milk. First one cow and then two until war came and ended my happy life in the country.

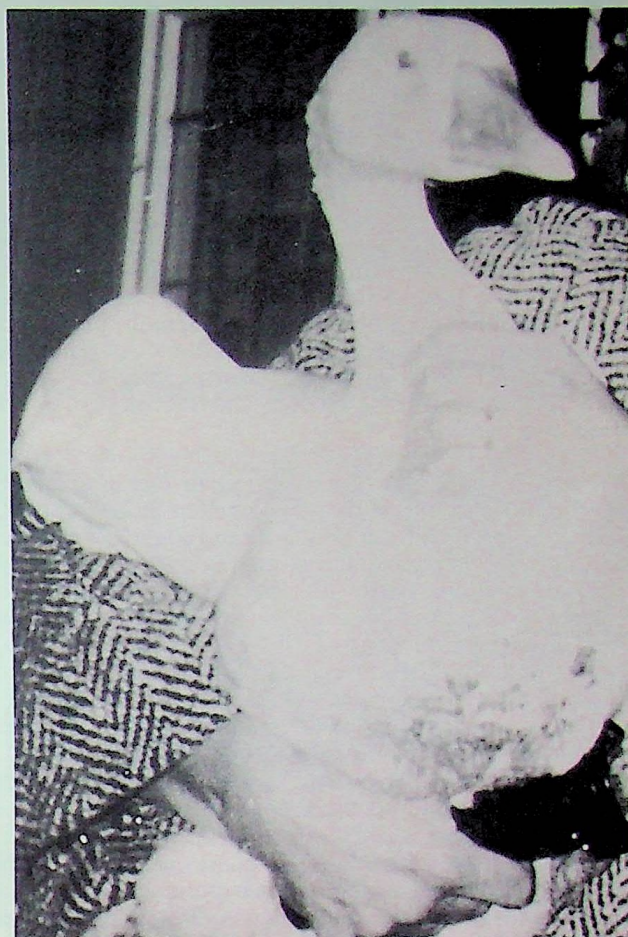
Now, three years later, I had made friends, on Saturday mornings, with the milkman's pony and found that the milkman, Mr Oakley, was a farmer with a large dairy herd. I asked him if I could come up on Saturday afternoons and milk some cows. He looked at me doubtfully, I was 12 years old, and said, 'You must ask your Mum'. I knew the answer, and that afternoon caught a bus which dropped me at a farm gate with a long lane leading up to a big farmhouse and an afternoon of bliss.

I had never seen such a herd, and all Dairy Shorthorns, ranged in four rows of ten or twelve in a huge building. I milked one and Mr Oakley checked up on me and passed me on to a second. I was much taller and stronger than I had been back at home and as the weeks went by could milk four before it was time to catch the bus. It was my war work and as no one praised me or scolded me, I took it as a compliment - being a Yorkshire child!

Now, on Christmas Eve, in answer to the door bell, I saw Mr Oakley standing under a gaslight with a parcel in his arms. He thrust it at me and disappeared into the dark calling out 'Happy Christmas' and vanished. The parcel was heavy. I lugged it into the dining room, put it on the table and unwrapped it. There, in all its glory, was a goose, trussed and dressed for the table and, in a paper bag, some onions, sage and parsley. A rasher of fat, home-cured bacon, was laid on each side of the bird's breast bone.

We gazed incredulously; it was a dream. We pinched ourselves, and were awake, and it was true. As if to prove it and, as a reminder of what could have been, there, on the table, were the four bloaters for Christmas. □

Little did Major Stubbs (right) think he would be eating goose for his Christmas dinner in 1917.



Who was Gilbert Talbot ?

Ken Prideaux-Brune has been reading a recently discovered account of the life of Gilbert Talbot, for whom Talbot House was named.

Gilbert Talbot has always been a somewhat shadowy figure to me. On many occasions, when staying in Poperinge, I have visited his grave, though I knew almost nothing of his life. But now a memoir, published early in 1917, has been discovered at All Hallows Church and I have been able to learn a little about the man for whom Talbot House, and therefore Toc H itself, was named.

Even so, it's difficult to get a clear picture of him. Partly it's the fact that the book was compiled by his mother, with contributions from his family and friends which are naturally full of conventional expressions of sympathy and consolation. Partly it's the life story itself, the conventional upper-class upbringing - home for this third son of a bishop was Farnham Castle and he was educated at Winchester and Christ Church, Oxford. It all brings to mind clichés of languid, effortlessly superior, young men lolling on sun-dappled lawns in the endless summer afternoon of Edwardian England. Yet there are incidents which help to bring the man alive across the intervening years.

On his last Sunday at school he spent the evening with his headmaster, reflecting on his experiences both as a junior and as a leader, and considering how these experiences might be made better for those who came after. The occasion still stood out in the headmaster's memory five years later.

During Gilbert's term as President of the Oxford Union Lloyd George came to speak. He was then at the height of his unpopularity. There were demonstrations in the



street outside and the threat of tumult, even of violence, in the debating chamber itself. An insulting question about the Marconi scandal seemed likely to ignite the row. Instantly, Gilbert was on his feet. Speaking, we are told, 'with great gravitas', he said: 'I feel sure that I am only expressing the unanimous opinion of this House, of whom the right honourable gentleman is the guest, when I say that we will not tolerate any insulting . . .' (the rest drowned in roars of cheering).

Or there's the account of him, during rest times in the war, reading aloud to his men from *Some Experiences of an Irish RM*.

Everyone talks of his energy and his zest for life. The writer A P Herbert, who lived in the same digs in Oxford, pictures him: 'thundering down in the morning, clamouring for the morning paper, and devouring over his coffee the latest ministerial speech; at the piano, patiently picking out some of the music he loved but could not make; or up in the little room at the top of the house, surrounded by many books and heaps of untidiness, arguing far into the night with a few familiar disputants . . . I see him in a hundred smoky college rooms, the meeting places of the many clubs which prized his speaking. Always he seemed to dominate the scene . . . Others might make a point, bark out a few disjointed retorts or exhaust a side issue, but none could so ably draw together the threads of the discussion and give them a constructive and comprehensive treatment. He was curiously lazy about getting up any subject requiring much detail or the study of figures . . . We told him he might be Prime Minister, but would never make a Chancellor of the Exchequer.'

No one doubted that politics would be his career. He was a Tory, a devotee in particular of A J Balfour. He had, writes his brother Neville, 'a great sympathy with the ideals of social and democratic betterment, which he believed that the younger men of the Tory party might make it their ambition to achieve'. Beneath the energy, the humour, and the continual flow of talk, argument and debate, there was a deeply serious core. Neville writes of 'a real though not fully operative basis of religion'; and six weeks before he died he wrote to a friend: 'I want you to have religion as a real thing in life. It is not just a matter of being good and going to church - it is romance, love, adventure, peace, beauty.'



The death of Gilbert Talbot on 31 July was remembered by the Poperinge Branch of Toc H. Branch member Michel Blanckaert sounded the Last Post and Bert Hill spoke the words of the Ceremony of Light.



▲ German prisoners pass the bombed Cloth Hall and Cathedral at Ypres during the Great War.

Photo of Ieper (formerly Ypres) today, showing the rebuilt Cloth Hall and Cathedral. ►

Scarcely had he left Oxford when war broke out. He joined the army in September and crossed the Channel the following May. His diary for June 15 contains this remarkably vivid picture of Ieper (or Ypres as it was then more generally known):

I despair of telling you what the place looks like. It beggars description . . . You cannot imagine it being rebuilt. We walked through the streets and found not one house which was not a mere mass of ruins or just a big heap of bricks. Of course there are fragments that remain, some with odd familiar advertisements - I saw one of Singer's Sewing Machines. Odder than anything is to go into any of the ruined houses. They nearly all show signs of being abandoned in panic, without their owners waiting so much as to pick up anything; half eaten meals are on the tables, clothes lie in confusion on the floor. And then we came into the famous Place. The Cloth Hall, roofless and ruined, lies all the way down one side, and the Cathedral is just beyond it. The whole square is covered with loose stones and rubble. As everywhere else in the town, there's not a living soul to be seen, except passing British soldiers . . . I saw two shell holes which made one gasp, one by the Cloth Hall, one at the east end of the Cathedral, the last the biggest, 16 yards across and 50 yards round - we measured it.

But the life of a subaltern was short. The end for Gilbert Talbot came at Hooze on 30 July 1915, just two months before his 24th birthday. His battalion had just come to the end of a stint in the line, holding a crater blown by a British mine. While they were marching the eight miles back to the rest area the Germans, using flame-throwers, recaptured the crater. With no time for more than a cup of tea, Gilbert and his men were



ordered back. They marched the eight miles again, crawled along the communication trench, and then through a shattered wood under intense shell fire. When they reached the point from which they were to attack, across 150 yards of open ground, only 16 men of the leading platoon were left to follow Gilbert. Every one of them was hit.

Gilbert Talbot came to symbolise a lost 'golden generation', young men with great gifts whose promise of distinguished service to the nation was never to be fulfilled. But it's the utter pointlessness of his death, the waste and futility of it, which saddens and horrifies. For 16 men to attack across open ground in the face of machine gun fire, was simply suicidal. And all to recapture a hole in the ground. 'Was it for this the limbs grew tall?' wrote Wilfred Owen in his poem 'Futility'.

Yet you cannot but admire the blind courage which sent him, unhesitating, to certain death. In his last letter to his mother, just eight days before he died, Gilbert wrote: 'I feel so near you really. It's easier for me than for you. Death is not so formidable or awful in a way here. Soldiers put it in its right place somehow. I know it's not the end - only an incident - and that the love that unites us wins through and will triumph over all. But I do long for home sometimes.'

Such is the man whose name and brief life Toe H commemorates. □

In the last of this series, which has focused on aspects of the Toc H experience during our 75th year, National Chaplain, the Revd J. Alan Johnson, analyses some important truths.

'I and Eternal Thou'

1915 to know
Toc H one
1990 another
75 YEARS

'To conquer hate would be to end the strife of all the ages, but for men to know one another is not difficult and it is half the battle.'
Barclay Baron

At the heart of Toc H is a very simple purpose. It is that we should meet together and discover the person behind the facade. Only when we get behind the labels, prejudices and assumptions about others do we begin the process of building loving relationships with them. And, as we build person to person relationships, so we discover for ourselves the infinite value of each human individual and can test the truth of what Jesus taught about life - that it is to be lived to the full, and that it is in God.

In *Point 3* this year I have read many letters questioning the Christian basis of Toc H, and even more which are critical of individuals within the movement. I have no quarrel with letters which offer opinions that encourage debate (though I may personally disagree with the opinions expressed), but I am concerned about those letters which make rash and sometimes very unfriendly remarks and assumptions about people. These are the very attitudes that Toc H deliberately seeks to correct.

Psychology, describing how we often treat other people, talks of seeing the other person as an 'object'. Something, rather than someone, to be used for one's own ends, manipulated, de-personalised. Martin Buber, a Jewish theologian writing earlier this century, also talks of 'I / It' relationships, where 'I' treat another person as an object, an 'It'.

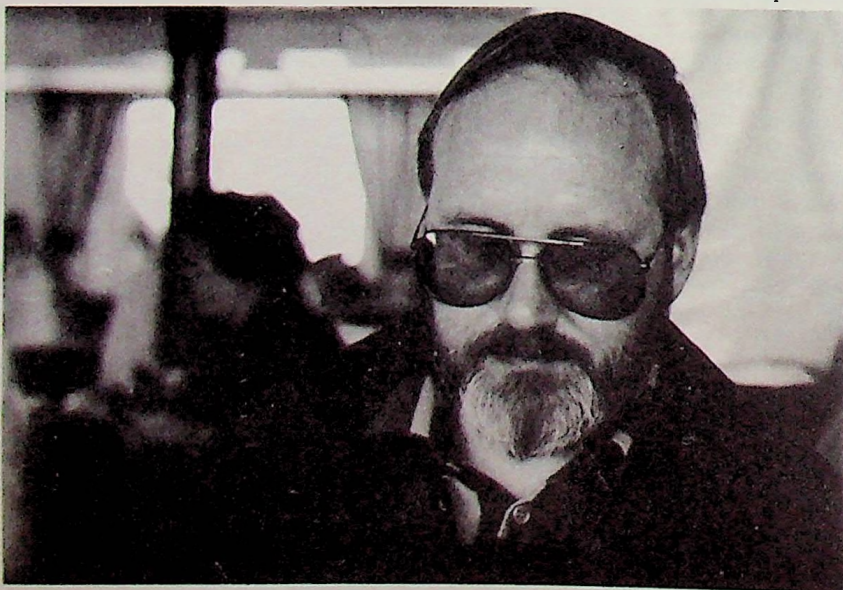
*'we treat people as objects
when we classify them with labels'*

We all know the consequences of treating other people as objects. Taken to an extreme this has resulted in slavery and the abomination of Nazism. But its effects

can also be more subtle. As a society, we treat people as objects when we classify them with labels - the mentally ill, the criminals, the down-and-outs. As individuals we 'objectify' people both by the labels we use and by our attitude towards them. In Toc H we talk of 'the CEC' or 'headquarters' or 'the membership' as though they were objects rather than groups of people. Whenever we respond to people by a label or whenever we relate to people superficially in order to get what we want from them, we have fallen into an 'I / It' relationship.

In Toc H our whole philosophy is geared towards breaking down those attitudes so that, in Buber's language, we build 'I / Thou' relationships in every sphere of life. In any good example of a branch, project, friendship circle or cameo, the members will be building relationships where 'I' will be relating not just to you as one person amongst many but to 'Thou' as a unique individual made in the image of God. Where relationships are 'I / Thou', there are two equally valuable people meeting together. This is simply another way of describing the experience men had in the Chaplain's room at Talbot House where they were commanded by the sign, and enabled by the chaplain, to 'All rank abandon, ye who enter here'.

If all relationships could be on this 'I - Thou' level, then perhaps we would come 'to know one another' and that indeed would be 'half the battle'. But there is more. Toc H has always been more than a society for building personal relationships. It has also been the place where people might discover God, not through preaching or teaching but simply and practically through relationships with other people.



Alan Johnson

Martin Buber talks of the discovery of a relationship between 'I' and the 'Eternal Thou' of the one, personal, loving and living God. But he sees this 'Eternal Thou' as a breath present in an 'I / Thou' relationship. For us in Toc H this is simply an explanation of what we know to be true: that in our friendship, fairmindedness and service together God is present and the kingdom is being built. And that is the stuff of the Upper Room, where men knelt together as brothers despite the army rank and acknowledged the God who was always present.

In the end it must be this 'Eternal Thou' which is at the heart of the movement. Without it Toc H is nothing. And it is this 'Eternal Thou' which we must come to know: in our relationships, in our service together, in our search for fairmindedness. In all of these God is present - the breath of the 'Eternal Thou' in the 'I / Thou' of our living.

The way of Jesus is more fundamentally about this than anything else. In the gospels we read continually of Jesus meeting with individual people, of his understanding, his forgiveness, his healing, his ultimate gift of himself on a cross. All of this was for individual people. And his teaching about God was personal; he called God 'Abba / Daddy', taught us to pray to him as 'Our Father'. In the desperation of the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus saw God as personal, and it was a private anguish he sought to solve. Even in his suffering on the cross he cared for individuals - his mother, the thief, his disciple.

*'it is in learning to live with one another
that we find love'*

The Christian faith has always been a religion of the person rather than a religion of a book. In Toc H we are convinced that the best way of understanding God and the world is through the life and teachings of Jesus. As a Christian based movement we try to live that out in all our relationships and all our works. And by doing so we more effectively preach the gospel than with any words we might use. It is in learning to live with one another that we find love, it is in love that we find God, and it is in God that we find meaning and the confidence to live.

That confidence is of crucial importance as we concentrate our work for today and the future. We

cannot achieve anything if we are to tighten our grip on the seeds we hold. To have any chance of success we must, like the sower of the parable, scatter them freely. The army feared for discipline when Talbot House was opened as a club for all ranks, but men discovered respect for each other, regardless of rank. The church feared the actions of Toc H in the 1920s, thinking it might become another denomination; but what resulted was the power of Christianity in action. Today we must not be frightened of opening our doors to 'Everyman' - welcoming those of other faiths and none, and admitting them to membership. We may teach them the truth of the living Christ and we will almost certainly learn more of the truth of the one God, whatever she is called.

'Toc H is about living faith'

Sometimes Toc H is at risk of forgetting its underlying purpose, just as the church sometimes forgets that it is only a means to an end and not an end in itself. We all know that Toc H is not about preaching a particular denomination or brand of religion. But Toc H is not about preaching a religion at all. It is about living faith. It is about a way of life, rooted in a personal experience of the living God. It is about making 'I - Thou' relationships and discovering an 'Eternal Thou'.

In the journey of discovery, which we ask all members to acknowledge, we have no simple map showing the 'right' way to go. We have the person of Jesus as a model, with all the depth and wisdom and complexity of any human being. The challenge is to build a relationship with him. In that relationship we must be confident that his spirit remains with us and not try to preserve it as some sort of safeguard for the future. Life and love are only of value if they are freely given away. The early experience of Talbot House thrived and grew only because men gave it freely to others. Toc H will only live if the experience is scattered. We cannot control where the seed will land or how it will grow, but there will be no chance of growth if we preserve it in a pickling jar.

In Toc H we have been given a great gift: that of transforming casual encounters into meaningful meetings. And in any meeting there are at least three people. 'I' the speaker, 'Thou' the listener, and the 'Eternal Thou' whose breath gives life. 'To know one another is not difficult and it is half the battle'. □

Tubby Clayton Crossword Answers

November Issue
- page 11.

Across: 1. Wartime. 5. Padre.
9. Received. 10. Once. 11. Lived.
12. Witty. 15. Manner. 16. Expand.
18. After. 20. Value. 23. More.
24. Ordinary. 25. Where.
26. Leaders.

Down: 2. American. 3. Therein.
4. Move. 6. About. 7. Race.
8. Adviser. 13. Freedom.
14. Enquirer. 17. Planned.
19. Freer. 21. Both. 22. Idle.

LOVE

Once more Christ's day has turned
around the sun,
when all our whirligig is done.

Computers are holly-decked
cash registers have checked,
at 'no-sale',
and all the Santa Claus
from the avaricious stores,
have hung their beards up - for
the warmth of children's
laughter has begun.

On the day that Christ has turned
around the sun.

Keith Rea

your letters

We reserve the right to edit letters.
Only letters with full name and address
will be considered for publication.

LET'S NOT LAPSE INTO COMPLACENCY

Philip Douch needs no defence from me. His record as a member and Staff Development Officer of Toc H is an exemplary one. There is no credal test for membership - the Movement is open to all who are willing to join in the experiment of weekday Christianity (diary definition).

However, I feel stung to respond to the final paragraph of Gwilym Edwards' letter in the September issue of *Point 3*.

I thank God for the wisdom and foresight shown by the Personnel Committee who originally appointed Philip to the staff of Toc H as for five years he (together with his wife Jane) has created and developed a vision which they had for sharing the spirit of Toc H with visitors to their home - Lindridge House. During that time, 1,656 people have stayed at Lindridge of whom 276

had not met Toc H before. The age range of the guests has been from nine weeks to 90 years.

Philip, through his writings, talks and discussions has led our members to think, stimulated us to take action and initiated new and worthwhile projects. Accepting his challenge of 1988 each of the eight districts in the South West Region has set up and run at least one Project and the majority were held at Lindridge. He has made no secret of the fact that he is not a Christian (as do many others in Toc H), and in fact, through provoking us to think, has promoted in me, certainly, a stronger belief in the Christian faith. All too often we lapse into a complacency which needs a prod from time to time.

When Philip Douch came to the SW Region in 1985 he had already been on the staff of Toc H for three years, inducted under the guidance of Padre Bob Knight in the Southern Region. So he came to us with a legacy and he has shared that with us. I feel a tremendous sense of privilege to have worked alongside him and am thrilled to have been invited to be one of the group of 12 who will share an hour's meditation with them in the upper room of Lindridge House prior to their departure on 14 October.

If Toc H had closed its doors to non-Christians throughout its past

75 years I feel we would not be here today and the rich tapestry of life and experience which we have inherited would have been the poorer.

Mary Edwards
Bath

THE MEANING OF 'HUSSIF'

It will be interesting to see how many readers guess the meaning of *hussif*, the mysterious word which Solihull branch have found in their early log book (*Point 3*, November). My guess: someone who had probably not seen the written form of this word used a phonetic spelling (that is, a spelling that mimics the actual pronunciation of the word) of the term *housewife*, here used in the specialised sense of 'a container or roll for sewing equipment' - typically a small roll for needles, cotton, etc., which could be kept in a pocket.

THIR Long
Wendover

POINT 3 FOR THE BLIND

Many of the Wellingborough Branch are actively involved in the production of the local 'Talking Newspaper for the Blind'. Every week over 200 blind or partially sighted people receive two 90 minute tapes, one containing news gathered from the local papers, the other of general interest.

Are there any blind Toc H members who would like to listen to tapes of the monthly issue of *Point 3*? All that is needed is a cassette player and the only fee is £3 for 12 months to cover the cost of cassettes which can be returned by post - free of charge.

Are there area magazines (such as *Mid Eastern*) that would like taping as well?

Harry C Bailey
27 Harrowden Road
Wellingborough
Northants NN8 3BG

SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH

I sometimes envy those people who take on the Christian faith so completely. At 74 years I am still searching for the truth. I joined Toc H 56 years ago, and was overwhelmed by a mixture of practical Christians, some with total commitment and some like me, on the verge, but all giving their hearts



This cartoon by U.S. cartoonist Rob Portlock is reprinted, by permission, from *Way Off The Church Wall*, published by Marshall Pickering. Price £2.99.

for others. Young people were attracted by the mixture and the spirit in which service was carried out. Youngsters today (with many exceptions) are too busy aspiring to ever increasing living standards and acquisitions, requiring the full time working life of two adults. They will readily subscribe to charity and have charitable thoughts, but time is of the essence, and spare time is challenged by many more activities than were available to us (facts, not sour grapes).

My branch is the same old mixture and extremes, and I love every single one of them; the trouble is, we are all getting old. I feel I am in keeping with Philip Douch, but the critic who feels he doesn't belong, must feel the same about me. Don't be too restricted by the words in the fourth point of the compass, they and Toc H have stood the test of time.

Arthur Pledger
Hemel Hempstead

WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

A comparative newcomer to Toc H. I am impressed by the sincerity with which many of its members hold to their Christian faith. It is the faith which inspired our founder and the movement sorely needs a fresh injection of that inspiration today. Nevertheless I deplore the prejudice evinced in Gwilym Edward's letter. It smacks too much of Ian Paisley ranting against the Catholics or evangelicals decrying the liberalism of the Archbishop of York. It raises the whole question, 'Who is a Christian?'

To me a Christian is one who follows the way of Christ, which was to hold out a loving and healing hand to the sick, the sinner and the outcast. Philip and Jane, during their stay at Lindridge House, have done just that and, seemingly unwittingly, have followed the way of Christ more faithfully than many of us who profess to be Christians. If Toc H is not prepared to welcome such as Philip and Jane in friendship it will not only die, it will deserve to die.

Bob Jasper
Beaminster, Dorset

EVERYONE'S CLUB

On the subject of Toc H titles, the place of Christianity, and so on, perhaps the title should be simply - Toc H-Everyone's Club. It has a distinguished precedent, it's simple.

it's understandable. One can imagine even your correspondents finding reconciliation in such a club!

With regard to the place of Christianity in Toc H, our tendency in the Movement is to concentrate on the basic sentiment of the second Great Commandment, Love your neighbour as yourself, with which few (believers or not) would quarrel and which seems to be inferred by all four points of the compass. The problem is knowing how we should approach the first Great Commandment, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul, for this must be impossible for those who do not understand, believe in or recognise the existence of God.

I cannot remember hearing or reading since my involvement with Toc H of the salvation offered to each of us by the death and resurrection of Jesus and I am not sure that this aspect is talked about very much in Toc H circles, though it's the essence of the Christian religion. This is the Good News! I agree with Philip that it's not the job of Toc H to preach religion, Christianity or anything else, although individuals are of course welcome and encouraged to express their views. Perhaps Toc H should settle for 'love your neighbour as yourself' although to do this adequately the inspiration and power of the living Lord Jesus is, to put it mildly, a great help and some would say indispensable.

David Owen
Aston Clinton, Bucks.

TOC H IS FOR EVERYONE

I thought that I had to write in answer to Gwilym Edwards' letter in the September issue of *Point 3*.

Toc H, Tubby Clayton always said, was a mixture of men. I interpret this as meaning the absolute believers, the waverers (like me) and the uncommitted.

I once knew an atheist who was one of the best Toc H members that I had ever come across. The movement would have been the worse without him.

After the District Team Meeting had ended and all the good Christians wanted to rush home straight away, the atheist Chairman would say, 'We will stop for homegoing prayers as Toc H is a Christian movement'.

I think this shows that God in his wisdom even uses the unbeliever in his work.

'God works in a mysterious way his wonders to perform'.

Bill Youngs
Essex

NO BEECHING NEEDED

A branch member recently wrote to me suggesting that 'the useful life of Toc H is drawing to a close', and that the 75th anniversary 'is a fitting time to wind up the movement'!

Added to these comments was the suggestion that: 'Toc H might take over a disused stretch of an old railway line in a pleasant and populous part of the country, and call it "The Toc H Line", with a chapel at the main station and an endless stream of handicapped people making visits'.

Now this really fired my imagination and I thought members might be interested in the idea and in my reply.

'I'm sure Toc H is on the right LINES and has a good HEAD OF STEAM. We are not at the END OF THE LINE although there may be some old BUFFERS who think so. There are lots of good things in TRAIN and all the SIGNALS give me hope for the future. We can see the light at the end of the TUNNEL and we must SHED discouragement. Our four POINTS will guide our JOURNEY and even the SLEEPERS will support our FIRST CLASS prospects'.

Ted Tunnadine
Sutton Coldfield

TOC H LOCO

I think it would be a good idea if HQ could write to the Chairman of British Rail requesting that our movement have its name on one of their locomotives. As a rail enthusiast, and always living near stations (my late father completed 51 years on the railway) I have a copy of the British Rail Pocket book, and there are many well known names listed - St John's Ambulance, Rotary etc. - and plenty of engines without a name. So how about it Toc H? It would be seen by thousands every day.

Alan Clarkson
Stockport

1990 rounds

Milford Toc H celebrated the 75th Anniversary with a special luncheon which included a birthday cake decorated with the Toc H colours.



Enfield Women's Branch - celebrating 75 years of Toc H in the horticultural marquee at the annual Enfield Autumn Show held in the central town park on 15/16 September. This year, with good weather, there was a record attendance of some 14,000 and as the marquee is probably the most popular, many people saw the exhibit. Thanks must go to Mr Doug Stacey, London Borough of Enfield Parks Superintendent and to John Burgess for their help and interest.



Our thanks for all the floral display photos which have been received during the centenary year. Merseyside District are sure theirs is the best, so we leave readers to make their own decisions.

Celebrations at Gorleston

Members from Northampton, Rushden, Norwich, Loddon, Lowestoft and the Haywain District travelled to Gorleston for the **Broadland District** celebration of the 75th Anniversary. A service in St Andrew's Church with the Revd Colin Cooper was assisted by the Revd John Handley of Reedham. This was followed by a buffet tea served in the adjoining Chapter House. Janet Westgate, District Chairman, welcomed everyone and mentioned that a message had been received from friends in Australia congratulating members on this special occasion.

The Ceremony of Light was taken by Gilbert Francis, former General Secretary of Toc H. The evenings entertainment which followed was compered by Gilbert and included items by the St Nicholas Singers, Britannia Handbell Ringers and poems and stories in the local dialect by David Woodward. Jean Whiteman, Vice Chairman of the C.E.C., spoke of forthcoming events.

Steaming Along in Swindon

'Imagine the excitement among ten children with physical disabilities from Burton Hill School, Malmesbury, as they boarded a train (and a steam train at that) at the station of the Swindon and Cricklade Railway Society', says David Pope from Swindon. This was the **Purton Branch's** way of marking the 75th birthday of Toc H.

After being run up and down the line twice they lined the platform to watch the engine pull the train out of the station and steam back again. The Branch then gave the children a tea, prepared by the railway restaurant staff, in the sun in their new picnic area. The children completed an exciting day buying souvenirs at the Railway Shop.



Staff Trip to Talbot House

Eleven members of Headquarters staff recently paid their first visit to Poperinge. Sylvia Norton, P.A. to the General Secretary, made a superb flag for the occasion and presented it to members of the Talbot House Association. The flag now flies alongside the Union Jack and the Belgian flag at Talbot House.

Left to right: Sylvia Norton, Jacques Rykebosch, Jeanne Oreel-Battheu, John Crocker (Hon. Warden), Kenneth Prideaux-Brune, Arlette Duclos, Marcel Bequoye.



Jenny Small

Talbot House 'Friends' visit Poperinge

Fifty members from Leicester, Sheffield, Kendal, Stockport, Higham Ferrers, Rushden, Weymouth, Colwyn Bay, Dorset, Surrey and Kent travelled to Poperinge in celebration of the 75th Anniversary. The party was led by Greta Lynn and Connie Pring. The Revd Bernard Elsdon, who accompanied the party writes:

'Nothing quite compares with the feeling of the Upper Room. There is a pervading sense of those who have gone before, but in no way is that feeling oppressive or funereal, far from it. There is a feeling of warmth, the warmth of loving arms that are enfolding you from the past, saying "We are with you still". It's what the Communion of Saints is all about. But... if the prayers of the faithful, and the regular Acts of Worship, and the sharing of the Sacrament of Holy Communion in that place begin to fail, the Spirit of God may move on, and the chapter close'.

HQ Garden Party

400 people attended the HQ Garden Party at Wendover on 1 September, part of our 75th Anniversary Celebrations. This was followed by an evening cheese and wine party and we were entertained by a quintet, led by Chairman, Alastair Muir, who played Bach. By contrast there was also a jazz group, led by Paul Gardner. Our thanks to Administrator, Barbara Martin, for all her hard work.



Jackie Barlett



Photo: Christine Bostock

The Hop Festival, Poperinge, which is held every three years, coincided with the Anniversary Trip.



Photos: Christine Bostock

Friends of Talbot House visit in September 1990. Cutting the 75th Anniversary birthday cake is Jeanne Oreel-Battheu.

**Continued from
previous page**

Partners in Promotion

'During the week beginning 16 September we were afforded a unique opportunity to demonstrate Toc H's work. This was Mental Health Awareness Week and we were able to work alongside other voluntary and statutory organisations and groups, to bring mental health promotion to the general public,' reports **Jane Reast** from Webb House.

'The focus for the week was a stand with balloons, stickers, badge-making, leaflets and a display in Middlesbrough's busiest shopping mall, The Cleveland Centre.

'Friendship Circles and Webb House members helped to organise the week and promote their work through informing and educating. Barriers that have led to stigmatisation were being actively broken down. By accentuating the positive we were aiming to put feelings and experiences on record as something we all have in common. In other words mental health isn't a euphemism for mental illness, the province of a dangerous disordered few!

'Local press and radio coverage was extensive and an added bonus was the interest shown in Toc H, its origins, history and the work today.

'For me, the uniqueness of the week was that our members, users of other services, and health professionals were working alongside each other in equal partnership.'



Photo: Jane Reast

Edie Coltman and Terry Elliot (staff) promote Webb House.



Photo: Ted Tunnadine

Letting off steam at Cromford Fair, following the September CEC meeting! Left to right: Christine Bostock, Chairman Alastair Muir (not looking where he's going), Ann Crouch, John Kilburn, Julian Ranson and Jean Whiteman.

News from Channings Wood

John Bowers, secretary of the brand new **Toc H Group at Channings Wood Prison** and Assistant Stage Manager for the Toc H production of 'Joseph', raised over £100 towards future projects when he ran in the Torbay, Devon, Marathon.

Pen Bailey, Development Officer based at Lindridge House, was there to cheer John on. It was his first marathon and he came in 58th out of nearly 300 participants.

There are six members from the prison in the new Channings Wood group and six from outside (3 male, 3 female) plus Pen Bailey. Mike O'Brien of Channings Wood is Chairman (fans will remember his superb performance as Ruben in 'Joseph').



Photo: Pen Bailey

Avon Support Group Project

There was a most enthusiastic response from St Michael's Cheshire Home, Axbridge, Somerset, to a Toc H summer project this year, run by the **Avon Support Group**. The aim was to give residents, all sufferers from MS, a break from the routine of the home and the chance to meet new friends. An exciting week of outings was arranged and the high spot was a fancy dress evening sing-along, organised by the 30 residents on the project. Resident David Hassell wrote to Hazel Scarlett at HQ:

'Our week of activity with Toc H is over. The residents, full of happy memories, now settle back to recover from the excitement of that happy week. The full tide of joy, of new formed friendships slowly fades. As we look sea-ward the retreating water is already out of sight and the landscape is now a faded dream. We know the tide returns - and we shall be waiting for it! Thank you!'

Hazel's daughter, Nicky, a teacher, was a volunteer on the project.

The Basingstoke Experience

Twelve volunteers from as far afield as Poole, Edinburgh and Ieper (Belgium), helped to give 32 children from Basingstoke an active and fun packed week of activities including visits to a butterfly farm, a dairy farm, Wellington Country Park and Marwell Zoo.

David Hawton, Project Leader, would like to say thank you to Jo Startup, Carol Button, The Support Group, Jan Lesley and Hartley Wintney Branch (who also gave us a barbecue), for all their help and support to make this project such a success.



Fun at Wellington Country Park

BAOR

1990 has been an exciting year for Toc H BAOR, especially for the Playschemes, reports Field Officer Tony Caldwell from Germany:

'We were able to organise an Easter Playscheme in Berlin led by John Ames plus three UK volunteers, five Germans and several local

people. This was very well attended, finishing with a barbecue-cum-disco, and will certainly be repeated next year.

'We then organised six playschemes for summer, comprising two in Berlin running concurrently and one each at our other Centres, which attracted, in all, over 500 children from mid-July to the end of August'.



points

▼ **Toc H - Victoria, Australia** report that their Emergency Alarm Project for the elderly, lonely and handicapped is now self-financing. In a working day they receive seven to ten requests for alarms.

▼ **Harry Mills**, who worked as Properties Officer at Headquarters for some years, reports that **New Forest District** have given £3,000 to furnish a bedroom at the Oakhaven Hospice at Pennington.

▼ **Sevenoaks District** celebrated the 75th anniversary in flamboyant style with a convoy of cars, decorated with Toc H stickers and balloons, taking a party of 40 elderly people from a residential home on a 36 mile round tour of Kent beauty spots. This was followed by a huge tea and sing-along with local celebrities.

▼ **Bexhill-on-Sea Branch** arranged a holiday for six disabled people at Strode Park, Herne Bay. It was their first holiday for several years.

update congratulations



Congratulations to Judy and Julian Ranson on their recent wedding.

welcome



A very warm welcome to Stewart Casimir, who joined the staff on 1 October and who takes over as Executive Secretary from 1 January.

Stewart is married, with five grown-up children, and lives at Eastcote, on the outskirts of London.

Far from new to charity work, he has 30 years experience to share with us - the last 15 in the field of mental health, as Secretary/Administrator for the Richmond Fellowship in Kensington.

**Continued from
previous page**

new members

**The following new members were
registered during October:**

Mrs Joyce M Stearn
(Buckingham J)
Paul Godley, Neil Waller (Central)
Mrs Louise M Finnie, Mrs Carol A
Long, Mrs Kim L Long, Yaugesh
K R Patel, Mrs Pauline A Posey,
Norman G Slater
(Melton Action J)
Mrs Nellie Davies, Mrs Doris Key
(Newcastle - Staffs J)
Mrs Jennifer Chandler,
Mrs Doreen Cox (Paris W)
Leonard C K French (Seaford J)
Barrie J Canner (Station J)
Christopher E Penman (Walsall M)

Welcome to 16 new members

small ads small ads small ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 10p a word (minimum £1) plus VAT, to *Point 3 Magazine*. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.

Raise funds quickly, easily. Superb ball-pens, combs, key fobs, diaries, etc. gold stamped to your requirements. Details: Northern Novelties, Bradford BD3 8BT.

Hythe, Kent - homely accommodation in member's home. Bed/breakfast and/or evening meal or full board, very reasonable rates. Enquire Nesta Cock, 7 Tournay Close, Lympne, Hythe, Kent CT21 4LL. Tel: 0303 269407.

London, Blackheath. B&B in family home. Double, twin. £30. Tel: 081 293 0023.

Letters, articles and news items are welcomed, and should be addressed to The Editor, Point 3, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT. (Tel: 0296 623911)

Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H movement.

Point 3 is available from Toc H Headquarters. Price: 30p per copy or £3.60 per years subscription. Any contribution towards the high cost of postage will be gratefully accepted.



**Point 3 is printed
on recycled paper.**

obituaries

**We regret to announce the death of
the following members:**

In September

Peter N Danmers (Exeter)
Kathleen M Kay
(Stony Stratford & Wolverton)
Stanley E King (Central)
Percival C Speare (Burraton)
Elsie Warner (Springfields District)

In October

Thomas R Vine (Exeter)

The Revd Roderic Wilkins died, aged 75, in June 1990 after a short illness. For over 40 years he had been padre of King's Norton & Northfield (W) Branch in Birmingham, and through him the branch was guided into work involving friendless patients at a local psychiatric hospital where he was chaplain from 1950.

LK

Taunton Branch lost a loyal and long standing member of Toc H when **Christina Awford** died on 3 August. We shall miss her cheerful presence, her joy in the beauty of nature, music and poetry, and, above all, her genuine concern for people. Chris will be remembered with love and affection by all who knew her.

WEO

His many friends in Toc H will be sad to hear of the death in August of **Bill Crook** - six days before his 75th birthday. Bill joined at Deal in Kent in Autumn 1931 while still at school and was made a member in March 1933. In 1951 he moved to Old Woking and joined Woking Branch. He became Chairman, a member of the District Team, Central Councillor on the Central Executive Committee and the Projects Committee. For almost 20 years he organised the Cycling Proficiency Scheme in Woking with other members. In 1958 he sold his business and joined the staff of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents - dealing with Child Cyclists. Between 1951 and 1975 he was an active founder member of the Old Woking and District Community Centre, was Chairman for 17 years and President twice.

SC

Maude Endacott who died on 7 August was a pupil at Haberdasher Aske School, Acton, where Barclay Baron's sister was a mistress, and this proved her first introduction to Toc H. She joined Fulham branch and became a founder member of Acton LWH branch in 1930. Maude served as Jobbie and Branch Secretary for a number of years, and as District Secretary and Central Councillor. She was very sad when Acton Joint Branch was forced to close due to falling numbers and the failing health of a number of members. Maude lived her Christian life to the full and was never happier than when helping others less fortunate than herself. We offer our sincere condolences to her family and many friends.

AG

Tavistock Toc H members and friends were very sorry indeed to hear of **Padre Gordon Ford's** death in an Exeter hospital in August. As our branch Padre, Gordon will always be remembered with affection for what he did for those sick at home or in hospital and for the support he gave to Toc H not only locally, but in other parts of the country.

JWD

Connie Gladish, of Dover women's branch, died peacefully in August in her 90th year. She and her cousin Lena Selves, who died in 1981, got particular joy from the club for deaf people which they ran for many years and from their wartime work mending linen and making splints at the local hospital. For 30 years, with a rota of Toc H helpers, they ran the hospital library service. Connie was a charming and gracious lady and a steadfast friend.

AB

Vernon Higgs, who died in August, was a man of strong views but he held no personal animosity for those with whom he disagreed. He was always welcoming and cheerful - his ability to find out and retain information about the people he met being something for which I always admired him. His quiet behind-the-scenes influence in the Swindon District will be something that will continue with us for years to come.

DP

Kathleen Molyneux, who died in August, became a member of Southport Branch in the 1940s and faithfully took the minutes of the meeting over many years. She did a lot of the minor jobs such as putting out chairs, setting up the lamp and serving behind the stall at coffee evenings. She was always a very willing Christian worker and will be sadly missed.

EP

Welshpool Branch were much saddened by the death of their Padre the Revd **Leonard West**, on 26 August just a few days before his 80th birthday. He will be missed for his gentleness and quiet words of guidance.

JDI

We in St Thomas Branch, Exeter, were all saddened by the death of **Edith Cruse**, who had been a member for several years. She was always willing to turn her hand to any task, was cheerful and very thoughtful of the needs of others, particularly the mentally disabled, with whom she worked for a number of years.

VS

Mollie MacMillan who died on 4 September was the wife of the late Johnnie MacMillan, a staff member for many years. She supported her husband in all his work and they touched many hearts wherever they went. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends.

EI

Elsie Warner, a long standing and loyal member of the former Bromley Branch and later of the Springfields District Branch, died on 8 September after a long illness bravely borne. Members were her friends and visited her until the end.

MB

We give thanks for their lives

The Club was formed to promote friendship between all sections of the community. If you are handicapped or disabled in any way we invite you to join us, at no cost.

Send tapes to:

**The British Association
for the Hard of Hearing,
The Boomerang Club,
74 Bridge Road, Oulton Broad,
Suffolk NR32 3LR.**

We Need Your Tapes

The Boomerang Club, a club for the disabled and handicapped, require your old pre-recorded tapes for their postal Music Club. Whatever you can spare will be put to good use and if you would like to join the Club we will be glad to hear from you.